

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 353
By Burks

A RESOLUTION to recognize Charles Denning, Editor of the *Herald-Citizen* in Cookeville, on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those outstanding journalists and editors who, in their years at the helm of local newspapers, have chronicled the life of their respective communities and regions with uncommon insight, creativity, clarity and commitment to fair and factual reporting; and

WHEREAS, Charles Denning is one such exemplary newspaperman and estimable person who has served with distinction at the *Herald-Citizen* for more than 38 years, 35 year as its editor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Denning took a much deserved retirement on at the end of April, ending a career that saw Cookeville grow from a small town with two weeklies, the *Putnam County Herald* and the *Cookeville Citizen*, to a small city and regional hub with a newspaper that has expanded from two issues a week to five and then to six with the Sunday edition; and

WHEREAS, born in 1931 in rural Obion County, Charles Denning decided that a future in farming was not for him; newspaper reporting was a dream from an early age, and he was influenced by legendary columnists such as Ernie Pyle, Billy Rose and Robert Ruark; and

WHEREAS, one of his English teachers, Frances McNeil, encouraged young Charles and supplemented the meager offerings of the school library by lending him books to read; suddenly seeing his future opening before him, he accepted her help as she pulled some strings through her brother, who had been editor of the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, and he was hired as a "cub reporter" for the *News-Sentinel* two weeks after graduating from high school; and

WHEREAS, a degree from the University of Tennessee and service in the United States Air Force followed, and in April of 1965, just out of the Air Force, Mr. Denning was hired as a reporter and photographer by Coleman Harwell, who had moved to Cookeville in 1960 after 12

years as editor of *The Tennessean*; from that fateful day forward, Mr. Denning's meritorious service with the *Herald Citizen* over the next 40 years was broken only by two years off for graduate school at Tennessee Technological University; and

WHEREAS, Charles Denning is described by his readers and colleagues and all those who know and appreciate him as a strong and honest voice in the community who brooks no nonsense with the facts of a story, but who also applies compassion and common sense to avoid unnecessary hurt or embarrassment; he has mentored numerous fledgling reporters through his insight, patience, probing questions, fearlessness, and clarity; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Denning is highly regarded by the entire *Herald-Citizen* staff, who appreciate his mentoring, accessibility, encouragement, and sensitivity; they, along with the newspaper's readership, will miss him greatly; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Denning has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues and readers alike; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we thank Charles Denning for his years of unstinting service to his community as Editor of the *Herald Citizen* and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.